

ECUMENICAL MINISTRIES *of* OREGON

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Testimony in Support of SB 797 and SB 868

April 17, 2017

Chair Prozanski, members of the Committee:

My name is Britt Conroy, and I am Public Policy Director at Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon.

EMO is a statewide association of over 140 Christian denominations, congregations, ecumenical organizations and interfaith partners working together to improve the lives of Oregonians.

I appear here today on behalf of EMO's Board of Directors to urge your support for two important pieces of gun legislation, Senate Bills 797 and 868. Both are common-sense legislation that will make our communities stronger and safer.

Though our organization represents many faith communities across Oregon, they are all bound by a shared belief in the sanctity of human life and the need to protect it. Gun violence is a daily tragedy that impacts Oregonians of all faith traditions and therefore we urge you to support this life-affirming legislation.

Senate Bill 868 reflects the caring and compassion that is critical for reducing gun violence across our state. Too often, family members and local authorities see the signs that an individual is in distress and considering violent actions. But to date these loved ones have had no way to legally intervene before it is too late. Senate Bill 868 provides the ability to temporarily remove a firearm before a person in crisis makes a one-time decision with permanent consequences.

Senate Bill 797 expands protection for some of our most vulnerable residents – victims of domestic violence and stalking. Abusive dating partners and those convicted of stalking should not have the right to own a firearm. This legislation will also allow law enforcement sufficient time to complete criminal background checks on potential gun buyers.

While we are resolute in our call for stronger gun laws, we also recognize that ending the epidemic of gun violence will not be addressed by any one step. We ask people of all faith traditions to join in reshaping our society to value the sanctity of life. We are pledged to heal the wounded, protect the vulnerable, and work for peace.

Thank you.

Britt Conroy
Public Policy Director, Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon